

Throughout the season, David showed great strength and a commitment to his music by putting his own personality into each of the songs he performed, and quickly stood out among the contestants. With the support of his family, friends and all of Blue Springs, David never gave up and due to his hard work and passion for music he became the new American Idol.

Madam Speaker, I ask you to join me in congratulating David Cook on being named the new American Idol. I am proud to represent such a hardworking and gifted individual in the Sixth Congressional District. I know that all of Blue Springs joins me in wishing him the very best in his future endeavors.

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
MERRILLVILLE ALLIANCE OF  
TRANSYLVANIAN SAXONS

**HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 22, 2008*

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Madam Speaker, it is my distinct honor to take this time to recognize the officers and members of the Merrillville, Indiana, branch of the Alliance of Transylvanian Saxons (ATS). On Saturday, May 31, 2008, the Merrillville Alliance of Transylvanian Saxons will host a celebration honoring its 100th Anniversary, while also celebrating the ATS National Constitutional Convention at the Radisson Hotel in Merrillville, Indiana.

The Saxons originated in Germany and traveled eastward to settle in eastern Hungary during the 12th and 13th century. Following the conclusion of World War I, the Hungarian boundaries were altered and the Saxons' home became Transylvania, one of the three major provinces of Rumania. In Rumania, the Transylvanian Saxons were oppressed as minorities by the totalitarian Rumanian government, causing many to migrate to the United States.

The ATS was founded as a fraternal organization in 1902, with a mission of providing a safe community for immigrant families of Transylvanian Saxons to share and enjoy their language and traditions. The Merrillville Alliance of Transylvanian Saxons was established in 1908 under its parent organization to offer the same community to the 3,000 plus Transylvanian Saxons who had immigrated to Northwest Indiana. The fraternal fellowship provides cultural activities such as singing, dancing, and family and youth exchange programs. The officers of the Merrillville ATS, who so selflessly give to their organization, share the goals of the national organization and allow for their longstanding traditions to remain a part of their lives.

This year's celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the Merrillville Alliance of Transylvanian Saxons will recognize the continuous efforts of the Merrillville Lodge's officers: President Jeffery Szostek, Vice President Daniel Schuffert, Recording Secretary Raymond S. Palyok, Treasurer Donald Bowman, Secretary Randall B. Floyd, and Trustees Walter Szostek, John Sumichrast and Jim Smith.

Madam Speaker, I ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in commending the officers and members of the

Merrillville Alliance of Transylvanian Saxons for the efforts, activities, and leadership they have provided in maintaining their Transylvanian Saxon history and culture as part of Indiana's First Congressional District.

HONORING THE LIFE OF SERGEANT  
JOSEPH FORD OF KNOX,  
INDIANA

**HON. JOE DONNELLY**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 22, 2008*

Mr. DONNELLY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and remember Sergeant Joseph Ford, originally of Knox, Indiana. Sergeant Ford was a proud member of Bravo Troop First Battalion 152nd Cavalry 76th Infantry Brigade Combat Team of the Indiana Army National Guard. He died on May 10 when his vehicle rolled over during a training exercise near Al Asad, Iraq. While his death leaves us all mourning a life cut short, I also wish to celebrate the life of this tremendous young man.

For most of that life, Sergeant Ford was simply known as Joey. When Peggy Shidaker, his high school French teacher, learned of his death, she said "He enjoyed life and we enjoyed having him," and she noted how he had been a student who made her laugh. Maybe he made her laugh because he genuinely enjoyed school and learning and made frequent trips back to Knox High School to visit his old teachers after he graduated. This love of learning showed up throughout his life; one of the first things Lieutenant Josh Chastain noticed about Joey after he joined the National Guard was his interest in world and military history. Lieutenant Chastain noted, "He was a really intelligent kid. He knew a lot." This passion and interest in history, both ancient and modern, led Joey to varied interests: he loved to fence, and he aided a school production of *The Three Musketeers* by choreographing the fight sequences. It also led him to leave Knox following high school to attend the University of Southern Indiana and major in history.

But Joey's passion in history reflected a passion for his country. This passion—this patriotism—kindled in him the desire to serve his country. And Joey did not only want to serve, he wanted to serve in the infantry, joining a National Guard unit based in New Albany rather than one more conveniently located in Evansville, where he was in USI's ROTC program. He was so dedicated that when he looked at military service following high school, he realized he had to do a lot of work to meet the fitness requirements; he did not hesitate to put in that effort, and he ended up losing seventy pounds to fulfill his dream of serving.

He became a proud member of the Indiana Army National Guard. Peggy Shidaker remembered him once again returning to Knox High School following his enlistment, "He was so proud that he came back to tell me he was going into the National Guard, and we were really proud of him and happy for him. He found his passion in serving his country." The passion to serve his country did not stop at the water's edge: Lieutenant Chastain noted that Ford wanted to be the gunner on an armored vehicle rather than the driver and said

of Joey, "He exemplified what a dedicated soldier is." This dedication is honored in his posthumous promotion from Specialist to Sergeant and the awarding of a Bronze Star.

Great as his love of country was, he loved his family even more, in particular his parents, Dalarie and Sam, and his wife Karen. Married just last June, Joey had met the love of his life during his time at the University of Southern Indiana. His friend and fellow Guardsman, Keith Auspland, noted that his conversations with Joey during training and in Iraq generally ended not with concerns about the mission but rather with concern for his family. Ausland wrote in his tribute to Joey that "Joe was a new husband and loved his wife dearly." Having deployed to Iraq in March, Joey had his goal of returning to Indiana in June to celebrate his anniversary with his wife.

When his mother Dalarie was asked the one thing she would want her son remembered for she said, "He was just so kind to everybody. At the memorial service, it was amazing just to see all the unique people who loved Joey. He never wrote off anyone and was friends with everybody: all shapes, sizes, and walks of life. He was a gentle soul." Today I honor and remember this gentle soul, this man who loved his wife and family, and followed his love of his country to service in a foreign land. Yet at the same time, I acknowledge our grief. He will be missed. May God bless Joey, his family, his fellow soldiers, and his country as we celebrate his life, and share in this collective sorrow.

IN RECOGNITION OF SAN FRANCISCO'S  
MEMORIAL TO HARVEY  
MILK

**HON. JACKIE SPEIER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 22, 2008*

Ms. SPEIER. Madam Speaker, today marks the birthday of a civil rights icon and hero to millions of men and women, not just in San Francisco where he made his strongest impact, but all across the globe.

Seventy-eight years ago, Harvey Milk was born in New York. After college at Albany State College, he enlisted in the United States Navy, but was dishonorably discharged when authorities discovered that he was gay.

In 1970, Harvey landed in San Francisco, the city that would become his home and legacy. He opened a business there and began attending the Board of Supervisors meetings, using his bigger-than-life persona to introduce the public and San Francisco's elected officials to the plights of gays and lesbians. Today, there are many such voices, but Harvey Milk was a trailblazer.

When he appeared on the scene, even in San Francisco, arguably the most tolerant city in our Nation, it wasn't safe or accepted to be outspoken on issues facing lesbians and gays. Even politicians within the community were silent, both about their lives and the issues that affected them. But Harvey wasn't one to be quieted or closeted. He told anyone who would listen—and more importantly, forced those who wouldn't—about the injustices, inequities and outright discrimination suffered by gays and lesbians. His voice resonated for anyone labeled "different" or outside the mainstream.